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Sept. 2, '76

Dear Harold,

I'm afraid you misinterpret my attitude toward and understanding of the matter of the 3 tramps or "tramps". There are two aspects to the thing. First comes the question: Are they genuine winos or are they fakes? My gut feeling is that the men are trying to pass as winos, and I have this feeling as a result of studying the pictures of the men and considering the circumstances of the day i.e. men were seen running from the Knoll by witnesses and Dick Sprague has found evidence in the DCA film of 5 men on the Grassy Knoll in apparent flight after the shots. The box cars of a train scheduled to probably pull out of Dallas shortly would be a good escape route, the best means of fleeing from Dealey Plaza. Also it is easy to bedew oneself or clothes with wine and thus reek of spirituous liquor.

The second question is if they are fakes and, assassination-connected, who are they? Now while it would take a good deal to change my opinion on the first aspect, I do not have firm opinions or definitive evidence as to who they might be. And I indicated this in my letter: I said "maybe" and "possibly." I'm not in a position to investigate the tentative identifications but, if I were, I would check out the men I mentioned, for openers, and if these individuals, supposing they could be found, bore no resemblance at all to the tramps, I'd simply scratch off their names as possible candidates. I'm not grasping at straws out of some frustration or need to believe. Rather, I'm assessing the evidence we have, and keeping possibilities in mind.

I do have reasons - a lot of them - for these tentative identifications, but it would take too many wearisome pages to go into them all. Sometime we might come back to the matter - but better discussed than argued on paper. Will only mention that when you say why would guilty men stay near the scene for two

hours, the time is overlong and you forget the matter of expectation i.e. they didn't (I think) expect Lee Bowers to hold up the train so it could be searched. I think they expected the train to leave in twenty minutes or so — and it did start to.

Sprague estimates (by angle of shadows in photos, and testimony of Sgt. Harkness, and by the timing of William Allen's sequence of photos) that the tramps were marched to the Sheriff's office about a half-hour after the shooting. Police officer Vaughn was involved in a boxcar incident shortly before 2 PM but it is my understanding that this came later, perhaps long after the arrest of the tramps. and it was still only 1½ hours after the shooting.

As to the Ray brothers, your opinion changes my "possible" to "remotely possible". But a couple of points are unclear. I assume there are only two brothers — in addition to Ray — but I am not at all certain of it. And I assume you know them both visually, but I am not certain of it. I'm sure they want to get their brother out of jail, but in other matters I doubt that I'd put much trust in what they might say.

I can't help but wonder if it's possible that two ex-FBI agents who are on the level, knowledgable about the assassination, and in touch with you can live in Dallas, where ex-FBI man Henry Wade holds on to power year after year after year (rather like J. Edgar Hoover). Maybe these men simply believe superficial evidence like reeking with wine — it's healthier.. the "just wines"'s the "line" of the Dallas Police & Warren Report. Or maybe you are being conned. And, of course, maybe you are right.

No, I don't think I'm influenced by nuts, self-seekers and "pot-boilers", as you say. I think that, on the whole, I maintain an unusually skeptical and independent point of view.

You announce a lot of things about me that simply are not the case at all. But, from time to time, I have noticed the operation of what I call "the principle of displacement", that is, feelings falsely attributed to some situation which may,

however, be applicable in other situations. There are areas of more direct personal concern to me than assassination matters where my imagination can run out of bounds and cause me unnecessary suffering, or, on the other hand, can prove inadequate and cause trouble as a result. However, although I feel keenly the tragedy we are all in, I have a clear head and a pretty deep keel for sailing in the treacherous waters of assassination-related material.

I agree with you that an awful lot of mistakes and carelessness and false rumors and disinformation is all around us.

I remain your great admirer and am always aware of your magnificent contribution.... but I must retain my own integrity and my own view even if it means differing.

best regards,
Madeline